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ABSTRACT

A 36-item observation instrument was developed for measuring appropriate social development in infants and toddlers. Checklist items indicated such behaviors as asking, protecting, comforting, lending, sharing, hugging, playing with, joining, laughing, smiling, looking at, performing request, leading, following, and conversing. Use of the instrument required that individual children be observed for 5 minutes four times in a 1-month period. Observers were directed to indicate behaviors they saw occur at least once. Observer training procedures developed in conjunction with the checklist consisted of three parts: (1) previewing and discussing instrument content and scoring directions, (2) viewing a 5-minute videotape of infant or toddler behavior in a center setting, and (3) observing a selected child jointly and unobtrusively. Total training time varied between 1 and 3 hours. In a field test of the instrument, 39 boys and 33 girls between the ages of 5 and 39 months at the Berry College Infant Toddler Center were unobtrusively observed each week for a 12-month period. Findings revealed a steady increase in the number of adaptive behaviors enacted over the year. It was concluded that caregivers, teachers, parents, and students interested in strengthening observation skills will benefit from an analysis and discussion of this instrument. (A copy of the checklist is appended.) (RH)

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THE MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS IN GROUPS

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THE MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL
BEHAVIOR OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS IN GROUPS

While there is no substitute for a loving mother, many women have responded to the economic or intrapersonal challenges presented by today's changing society by placing their child in a day care setting. Approximately 40% of mothers with children under three work outside the home.

Many mothers have an intuitive aversion to day care. The data seem to support them. The effects on children in day care are mixed: there are more childhood illnesses and cognitive development, while initially accelerated, is no different from matched groups without day care experiences by first grade (Beck 1979).

Many privately and federally funded infant/toddler programs have been instituted in response to increasing demands on mothers to leave the home to work. A reliable behavioral instrument to assess social behavior, in groups, would enlighten and assist caregivers and parents.

In response to this need a 36 item observation instrument was developed for measuring appropriate social development of infants and toddlers (see appendix A).

Observer training procedures were composed of three parts beginning with a preview and discussion of instrument content and standardized scoring directions. The second phase included observing a preselected videotaped, five-minute segment of an infant or toddler in a center setting. Reliability of the trainees was compared on a percentage of agreement criteria with the trainer (87% interrater reliability). The last step included joint unobtrusive observation of a selected child at the Center. Training time has been found to be between one and three hours.

Thirty-nine boys and 33 girls between the ages of 5 and 39 months were unobtrusively observed at the Berry College Infant Toddler Center each week over a twelve-month period. Approximately sixty-eight percent of the children were from families of average income, fourteen percent were from above average income and eighteen percent were from low income families. Seven of the nine black children included were from the low socio-economic income level.

A steady spurting increase in the numbers of moving toward (adaptive) behavior was noted over the 12 month period (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

- Insert Table 1 about here -

The standard deviations indicate a range for 2/3's of the individuals observed. Thus at 27 months 2/3's of the toddlers emitted between 10.7 and 16.1 adaptive behaviors. (See last column). Approximately 95% of the children observed at 27 months emitted between 8 and 18.8 adaptive behaviors.

Figure 1 reveals the approximate direction, average and 2/3 band for all infants and toddlers observed.

The information collected can be used in the following ways:

1. to generate an expected range of normative social development
2. as a diagnostic measure to indicate if concern and action is warranted on a particular child
3. curriculum modification
4. counseling with parents or staff
5. center accountability
6. to train psychology and education students, parents and caregivers in methods of observing infant and toddler social development and to gain insights into their personalities
7. data collected could be summarized for funding sources

Child care professionals, educators, parents, and students interested in strengthening their observation skills will benefit from an analysis and discussion of this instrument.

While too few infants and toddlers were observed to generate totally assured expected normative changes in social development, a beginning has occurred. As more data is collected we and others using the instrument should possess enough reliable and valid information to assess accurately and predict the changes in social development of infants and toddlers in day care centers and home.

Infant/Toddler Development Center
Social Behavior Observation Instrument

Appendix A

This observation record provides a framework for observing and recording the social behaviors of a child. Your role as an observer is to watch and listen for signs of the 55 behaviors listed and to record whether or not they were observed, without making judgements to the relative importance or relevance of these behaviors.

There are 4 separate 5-minute observation marking periods during the month. These are indicated by the column headings, I, II, III and IV. During a period spend the first five minutes observing the behavior of the child. In the last five minutes go down the list and place a check mark in the appropriate column beside all the behaviors you saw occur. Leave blank the space beside behaviors which did not occur or which did not seem to apply to this particular observation. Please consider every behavior listed, mark it or leave it blank. A particular item is marked only once in a given column, no matter how many times that behavior occurs within the 5-minute observation period. A behavior which occurs a dozen times gets one check, the same as an item which occurs once. Repeat this process for the second 5-minute period.

MOVING TOWARDS OTHERS

	Obs. & Date I	Obs. & Date II	Obs. & Date III	Obs. & Date IV
1. Asking peers for assistance (with eyes, hands, or words)				
2. Asking adult for assistance				
3. Protecting, defending				
4. Comforting or assisting peer(s)				
5. Lending				
6. Offering one's consumables (paper, food, etc.)				
7. Sharing with peer(s) (doing together)				
8. Hugging, patting, clasping peer(s)				
9. Hugging, patting, clasping adult(s)				
10. Playing with peer(s)				
11. Joining, on-going group				
12. Laughing, not at expense of other(s)				
13. Smiling (to self)				
14. Attracting others attention (e.g.smiling) upon completion of task				
15. Responding appropriately to personal attack				
16. Initiating on-task vocalization with peer(s)				
17. Initiating on-task vocalization with adult(s)				
18. Expressing idea(s) to group (verbally or non-verbally)				
19. Waiting turn without fidgeting or fighting				
20. Looking at adult when adult is speaking to others				
21. Looking at peer(s) when spoken to by peer(s)				
22. Looking at peer when peer is speaking				
23. Performs adult's request				
24. Resisting interference				
25. Role playing (actual situation)				
26. Making believe (fantasy)				
27. Replacing materials without direct order				
28. Leading others				
29. Following others				
30. Competing with peer(s)				
31. Initiating on-task play with adult				
32. Initiating on-task play with peer				
33. Conversing with peer				
34. Conversing with adult				
35. Playing with adult				
36. Looking at adult when spoken to by adult				
TOTAL				

FIGURE 1. CHANGES IN ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR

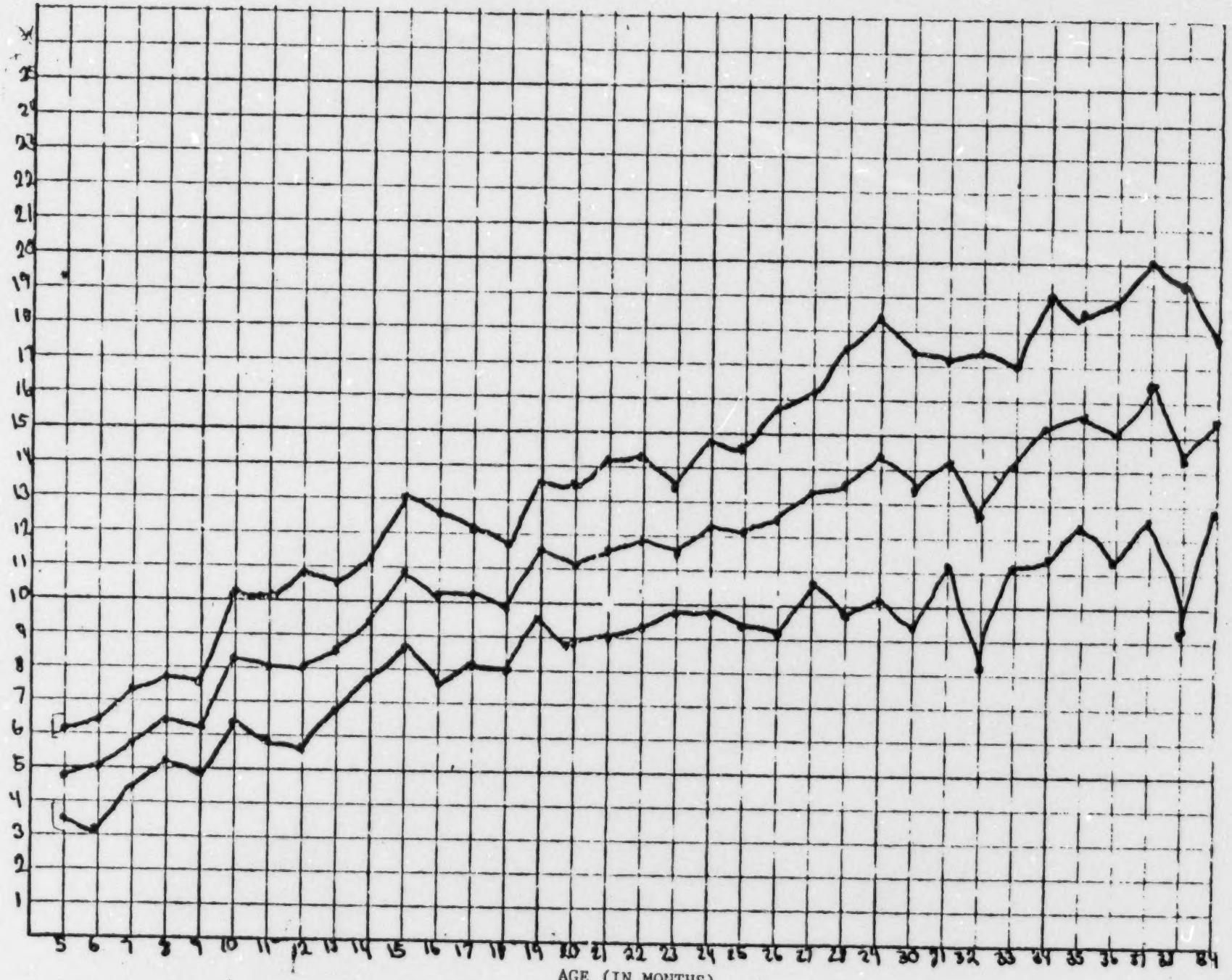

TABLE 1

Summary Of "Moving Towards" Behavior Per Month

AGE (in months)	SAMPLE SIZE	MEAN NUMBER "Moving Toward" (adaptive) Behavior	STANDARD DEVIATION	1 SD ± 1 SD
5	5	1.8	1.30	3.5 - 6.1
6	8	5.0	1.77	3.2 - 6.8
7	6	5.8	1.47	4.3 - 7.3
8	7	6.4	1.27	5.1 - 7.7
9	12	6.2	1.34	4.9 - 7.5
10	9	8.2	1.86	6.3 - 10.1
11	9	8.0	2.12	5.9 - 10.1
12	21	8.0	2.36	5.6 - 10.4
13	18	8.6	1.79	6.8 - 10.4
14	18	9.4	1.65	7/8 - 11.1
15	19	10.9	2.09	8.8 - 13.0
16	21	10.2	2.46	7.7 - 12.7
17	18	10.2	2.12	8.1 - 12.3
18	14	9.9	1.92	8.0 - 11.8
19	19	11.4	1.95	9.5 - 13.4
20	16	11.2	2.29	8.9 - 13.5
21	15	11.6	2.61	9.0 - 14.2
22	15	11.8	2.54	9.3 - 14.3
23	19	11.6	1.93	9.7 - 13.5
24	19	12.2	2.55	9.7 - 14.8
25	21	12.1	2.59	9.5 - 14.7
26	25	12.5	3.30	9.2 - 15.8
27	24	13.4	2.70	10.7 - 16.1
28	28	13.6	3.86	9.7 - 17.5

Table 1 (continued)

29	25	14.3	4.11	10.2 - 18.4
30	25	13.4	3.91	9.5 - 17.3
31	22	14.1	3.03	11.1 - 17.1
32	22	12.8	4.59	8.2 - 17.4
33	21	14.1	2.90	11.2 - 17.0
34	21	15.2	3.79	11.4 - 19.0
35	24	15.4	3.25	12.2 - 18.7
36	24	15.1	3.76	11.3 - 18.9
37	16	16.3	3.66	12.6 - 20.0
38	8	14.3	5.09	9.2 - 19.4
39	5	15.4	2.50	12.9 - 17.9